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SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS

[B. A. B. Bull. 148]

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Brazilian influence. He owns ceremonial regalia and is privileged to suffocate undesirable newborn infants.

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Individual differences in wealth occur mainly with reference to highly prized feminine ornaments, which are inherited matrilineally. It is noteworthy that a Kejara adept at manufacturing grindstones for the community was thereby freed from the necessity of engaging in direct activities for subsistence.

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Arrows were the major standard of value. They were presented to a jaguar-killer or to the kinsmen of one's mistresses and bartered against cotton or tobacco.

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Etiquette.—No man roasted his own kill, but was expected to pass it on to another. Corresponding procedures obtained for valuable furs and teeth. The skin and teeth of a jaguar went to the nearest relatives of the most recently deceased member of the tribe, the slayer receiving as his reward a decorative bow and arara feathers.

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Some regulations naturally fall under the category of taboos and ritual prescriptions. Before a hunt a *Western Bororo* was continent for 4 days, and painted his face with urucú. Women were not allowed to touch arrowheads. In the distribution of important game and fish it was essential for the bari to consecrate the animals, whereupon he might appropriate the choicest pieces.

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Sneezing is connected with distant members of one's family.

WARFARE

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War arrows were of seriba-palm wood and had a bamboo tip which broke in the victim's body (fig. 53, g). A club sword, a little over 3 feet (1 m.) in length, of heavy aroeira wood and lanceolate form, was suspended by a cord from the left shoulder. The spines of meru and tamu fish, attached to bracelets or to the fingers, made effective knuckle-dusters.

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The *Cayapó* were the chief enemies of the *Eastern Bororo*, and *Guaná* and *Guaycurú* of the *Western Bororo*.

LIFE CYCLE

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Childbirth.—At a São Lourenço child's birth the parents fast for 2 days, taking only a little warm water on the third, lest father and child fall ill. In the Rio das Garças group abstention from food, drink, and smoking lasts from 3 to 5 or even 10 days, the object of the taboo being to make the infant able to bear hunger. The mother does not touch meat for several months. Parents here must not put their hands on their hair during this period—an indirect suggestion of a scratching stick—lest their hair turn white.

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534 resonators, as well as "polyglobular" trumpets consisting of three or four gourds joined with wax; stopless flutes; and the bull-roarer. Drums that now occur are suspect of White derivation.

535 Dances.—Among the dances may be mentioned that preceding
[706] battle, in which the performers bend their knees in position and periodically shout as a chief shakes the gourd rattle. In the *Western Bororo Jaguar* dance, the hunter of a slain jaguar plays the part of the beast, being supposedly possessed by its soul; he wears the skin described above (pl. 89), also necklaces of jaguar claws and teeth, and executes furious leaps while the attending women wail. The object of the performance is to appease the spirit of the animal.

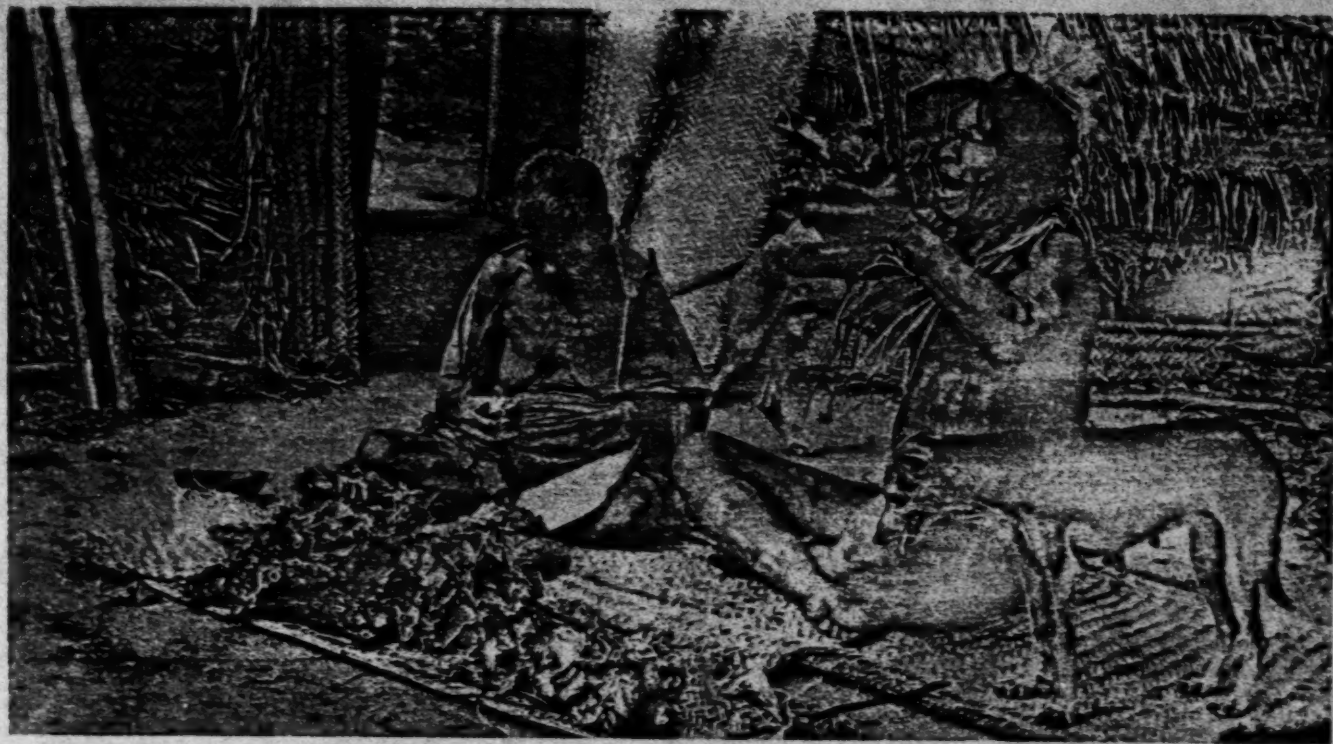
272 Beverages.—Besides their nut gruel, the *Bororo* drink palm wine:
273 the acuri tree is tapped for its sap, which is allowed to drop into pots
[756] or mortars and is quaffed from bamboo vessels. This beverage is drunk by incipient medicine men.

RELIGION AND SHAMANISM

771 Supernaturalism rests on two systems of belief with distinct and
776 rival functionaries.
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(1) There are evil spirits who are the souls of dead baere (plural of bari; see below) or never were anthropomorphic; they normally dwell in the sky, but are able to visit the earth, where they are known as bope, maeréboe, or waikuru. They cause falling stars and illness, can predict future events, but above all claim the prerogative as to various kinds of food, which unauthorized mortals consume under pain of sickness and death. The bope possesses a bari and eats the dishes in question with the bari's mouth. These spirits also appear in dreams and reveal the future, but they take no interest in the social life of the Indians and do not in any significant way figure in any myth.

771 A bari becomes such through visitations of a bope. He must scrupulously observe the rules laid down to him on pain of loss of power and catching an incurable disease. However, the bope may render him invulnerable and give him the power to hunt game in the guise of a jaguar. The bari may inflict disease and death, but also cures and confers other benefits on the tribe. A client will offer him a cigar, whereupon the shaman calls on the bope, a number of whom led by a spokesman then possess him. In doctoring, the bari smokes the cigar, then the spokesman of the spirits asks why they have been called. One present explains, then the doctor sucks the afflicted parts, expectorating the putative cause, e. g., a beetle, which he scans, announcing his prognosis. Certain feminine diseases, however, he must not attempt treating lest he impair his supernatural powers. Most important of the bari's functions is the "consecration" of the food reserved to the bope—a procedure that ensures to himself the choicest morsels.



AFTER BITING FISH, shaman passes it on to his wife, who also bites it. Only then can rest of Bororo eat. The rite is

preceded by shaman's hypnotizing himself into a trance, during which he is "possessed" by *Bope*, a powerful spirit.

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None of the fish may be eaten, however, until ritually treated by the shaman, or medicine man. First, he induces a seizure of trembling, during which he is thought to be possessed by *Bope*, a powerful—and sometimes evil—spirit often invoked by the Bororo to help them locate game and fish. Shaking with the power of his spirit helper, the shaman bites into each piece of fish, thus driving out evil spirits and symbolically consecrating the fish to *Bope* in return for his help in catching it. When this act is completed, the shaman passes the fish to his wife, who also bites it. Only then can other members of the society partake of it.

THE Bororo believe that deaths are also caused by *Bope*. He is identified, in their minds, with the jaguar, and when a death occurs, the Bororo take revenge for their loss by killing a jaguar. This, too, is surrounded with ritual. A few days after a death, the shaman determines where a jaguar can be found by consulting the corpse in its grave. After the corpse has communicated the location of a jaguar, the shaman tells the relatives of the deceased, who then request an outstanding hunter of the opposite moiety to undertake the task of finding and killing the jaguar. To help him in the venture, the bereaved family gives the hunter two presents. The first is a gourd whistle, the sound of which represents the voice of the dead man's soul. The second is a braided cord,

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[p. 42-B]

COOK]

BURURÓ INDIANS OF MATTO GROSSO, BRAZIL

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priesthood seems to lie largely in the ability to throw themselves at will into a savage ecstasy. 755

When a Bororó is ill, a priest is called to determine whether he will recover or die. On entering the hut and looking at his sick tribesman and concluding that he will probably die or should die, he will count his fingers, and each time he touches one finger will repeat, "Meri, meri, meri, meri, meri, bi," meaning that the sick man will see five suns, five days, and die, or he may say, "Nadua, nadua, nadua," etc., "bi," meaning sleep, sleep, etc., five days, and die. If at the end of this time he still lives, the executioner, sent of course by the priest, will suddenly appear in the hut, sit astride his stomach, and strangle him to death, for the reputation of the priest must be maintained. The priests are probably responsible for not a few deaths. They are the bane of life in the tribe. They must nurture the delusion that they can communicate with and have influence in the other world and power to avert or cause evils and calamities. They are therefore on the alert to take advantage of any propitious occasion to prey upon the superstitious fears of their fellow-tribesmen. They are freely supplied with food by their tribesmen in order to retain their good will.

The Bororó seem to have no idea of God as the Christian understands Him. They consider the sun as the fountain head of majesty and power and even of beneficence, and as the abode of the great priests who have passed to the spirit world and fear him. Hope means spirit or disembodied soul, but they seem to have no idea of a good spirit. The hope, who are evil spirits, must therefore not be offended though they must be driven away. To drive the spirits off, they use a bull-roarer, a peculiar instrument made of a slab of wood about half an inch thick, shaped something like a fish, and of varying size, hung by a long cord from the end of a stick like a fishing rod, and swung round and round through the air. As it swings and rapidly revolves, it sends forth loud sounds to a surprising distance, pitched from a sepulchral moan to an unearthly shriek, the wail rising and descending the scale according to the rapidity of the swing or the size of the instrument. To hear several of these roarers at once certainly produces most unusual sensations, particularly when operated, as we heard them, during a tropical storm amid the play of the lightning, the crash and roar of thunder, the falling floods, and dismal gloom. No female is allowed to see this instrument under pain of death. New ones are made as occasion demands, and they are burned immediately after their need has passed. We entered the baehytú as some of these roarers were 776
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778 being made for the funeral prelude. There was deep silence, and
123 the word *hope* was whispered low and mysteriously. Certain warn-
ing calls are given some hours in advance of the time for bringing
the roarers into use, and, hearing these warnings, the females enter
their huts, close the openings, and hide their heads. The roarers
are manipulated outside the village up and down through the bush.
We had difficulty in securing examples of these instruments. They
were brought to us at night securely wrapped and amid the greatest
secrecy, every precaution being taken to make sure that we would
keep them where there would be no possibility of a female seeing
them. We also had much difficulty in obtaining the base flute
which is played only over the bones of their dead. A captain said
to me, "That is a very bad instrument; you must not take it. If
you do you will never return."

481 The Bororó are expert swimmers and are fishermen of the highest
226 order. One mode of fishing is to swim out into the river, three or
four miles above the village, with a net called *buke*, like a great bag,
its mouth secured to two parallel rods nine to twelve feet long, bound
together at their ends. When one or more fish are seen, the mouth
of the sack is opened by springing the rods apart, and with wonder-
ful dexterity the fish are bagged and the mouth of the net quickly
closed by allowing the rods to spring together. The fisherman then
plays the game, especially if it be large; gradually rolls the net over
the rods till the fish cannot move, brings it to the surface and kills it
with a club, which he trails by a cord from his neck. The fish is
now taken from the net, strung on a cord, and floated along with the
club. Sometimes two or more fish of twelve or fifteen pounds will be
taken at one catch, or maybe one weighing as much as the man him-
self will be bagged in this way. A Bororó will remain in the water
an hour or two continuously, and return ashore with six or eight
large fish. They have learned to turn their bodily strength to the
greatest account while in the water.

226 Another method of fishing is with a bone harpoon, to which is
secured a long cord and a short detachable bamboo staff. With this
the fisherman enters the water, and, finding a large fish in the shadow
of a rock, following it with great expertness if it moves, he plunges
the harpoon into it even at a depth of fifteen or twenty feet, while
the staff detaches itself and remains in his hand with the end of the
cord secured to it. The fisherman now returns to shore and plays
the fish until he lands it.

Another method, when fish are scarce, is for one gang of men to
enter the water with their sack nets, three or four miles above the